



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Frequently Asked Questions about Isolation and Quarantine

Updated September 4, 2020

Under Governor Larry Hogan’s direction, state agencies continue to develop comprehensive and coordinated prevention and response plans for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) will communicate directly with the public, providing updates as this situation develops and accurate information about how to protect yourself and your family.

As of 5 p.m. on Friday, September 5, Maryland will move from Stage Two to Stage Three of the ‘Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery’ with additional safe and gradual reopenings of most activities with social distancing and face covering requirements. Stage Three will be implemented in multiple phases with a flexible, community-based approach that empowers individual jurisdictions to make decisions regarding the timing of reopenings. For the reopening status of Maryland's jurisdictions, please visit <https://governor.maryland.gov/recovery/>

If you have questions about COVID-19 that are not answered here, call your local health department or dial 2-1-1.

What is the difference between quarantine and isolation?

Isolation is the separation of people with COVID-19 from others. People in isolation need to stay home and separate themselves from others as much as possible. Sharing food, utensils, bathroom facilities and sleeping quarters, as well as contact with pets, should be avoided.

Quarantine is for people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 because they were in close contact with someone with COVID-19. These people may or may not get sick. People in quarantine should stay home as much as possible for 14 days, limit their contact with other people, and monitor themselves closely for symptoms of COVID-19. Most people who are going to get sick will get sick within 2-14 days of exposure.

Who needs to quarantine?

People who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19—excluding people who have had COVID-19 within the past 3 months.

People who have tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to quarantine or get tested again for up to 3 months as long as they do not develop symptoms again. People who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID-19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.

What counts as close contact?

Close contact is defined by the CDC as being within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

I just tested positive for COVID-19. What do I do?

Follow your healthcare provider's guidance. Most people can recover at home. It is important that you stay home and take care of yourself. Stay away, or isolate, from others as much as you can. Read the CDC guidance on [What to Do if You are Sick](#). Do not have visitors, unless they are caring for you.

When is it safe to resume normal activities after I have been in isolation?

Most people with symptoms of COVID can follow the CDC's three conditions before being around others:

1. It has been at least 10 days since you first felt sick, AND
2. It has been at least 24 hours since you last had a fever without fever reducing medication, AND
3. All your other COVID-19 symptoms have gotten better.

If you tested positive but have no symptoms and you continue to be well, you can be with others after 10 days after testing positive.

When around others, remember to stay six feet apart and wear a face covering.

This guidance is subject to change. Talk to your health care provider especially if you have a high-risk underlying health condition or if you are 65 years and older. You may need to stay away from other people longer.

When is it safe to resume normal activities after I have been in quarantine?

If you remain symptom-free, it is usually safe to resume normal activities when 14 days have passed since your last contact with someone with COVID-19.

Will my positive COVID-19 test results be reported to anyone?

Yes. Under Maryland law, positive COVID-19 test results will be reported to the Maryland Department of Health and local Health Department. However, your information will not be shared with the public, or in contact tracing investigations with people who may have had close contact with you. See [covidLINK](#).

What symptoms require medical attention right away?

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency care provider if you have:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

Let 911 or the provider know you have COVID-19. This will help them know how to care for you and keep other people from getting infected.

How can I protect my family or caregivers while recovering from COVID-19 at home?

Try to stay away from others as much as possible. Try to stay in one room and, if you can, don't use the same bathroom as them. When around others, wear a face covering and have them wear one too. Everyone should wash their hands often. Avoid sharing anything like dishes, towels, or bedding. Make sure all high touch areas are disinfected every day. See [Caring for Someone Sick at Home](#).

Caregiver Tips:

- Wash hands often.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Shared spaces in the home should have good air flow. If you can, open a window or use a fan. This will help remove COVID-19 respiratory droplets from the air.

- Wear a disposable facemask and gloves when you touch or have contact with the patient, especially when you have contact with their blood, stool, or body fluids, such as saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine.
- Wash clothes or bedding that have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Keep soiled items away from your body. Wash laundry thoroughly.
- When removing gloves and mask, first remove and dispose of gloves. Then, wash your hands right away. Next, remove and dispose of facemask, and wash your hands again.
- Throw out disposable face masks and gloves after using them. Do not reuse.
- Place all used disposable gloves, facemasks, and other contaminated items in a lined trash can. Wash your hands at once after handling these items.
- Clean all “high-touch” surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables, every day. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.
- Household members should care for any pets in the home. Do not handle pets or other animals while sick. For more information, see COVID-19 and Animals.